NUMB. XX.

The GUARDIAN.

——————Minuti
Semper & infirmi eſt animi, exiguique voluptas
Ultio—————— Juv.

Friday, April 3. 1713.

ALL Gallantry and Faſhion, one would imagine, ſhould riſe out of the Religion and Laws of that Nation wherein they prevail; but alas! in this Kingdom, gay Characters, and thoſe which lead in the Pleaſures and Inclinations of the faſhionable World, are ſuch as are readieſt to practiſe Crimes the moſt abhorrent to Nature, and contradictory to our Faith. A Chriſtian and a Gentleman are made inconſiſtent Appellations of the ſame Perſon; you are not to expect eternal Life, if you do not forgive Injuries, and your mortal Life is uncomfortable, if you are not ready to commit a Murder, in Reſentment for an Affront: For good Senſe as well as Religion is ſo utterly baniſhed the World, that Men glory in their very Paſſions, and purſue Trifles with the utmoſt Vengeance; ſo little do they know that to Forgive is the moſt arduous Pitch human Nature can arrive at: A Coward has often Fought, a Coward has often Conquer'd, but *a Coward never Forgave.* The Power of doing that flows from a Strength of Soul conſcious of its own Force, whence it draws a certain Safety, which its Enemy is not of Conſideration enough to interrupt; for 'tis peculiar in the Make of a brave Man, to have his Friends ſeem much above him, his Enemies much below him.

Yet though the neglect of our Enemies may, ſo intenſe a Forgiveneſs as the Love of them is not to be in the leaſt accounted for by the force of Conſtitution, but is a more ſpiritual and refined Moral, introduced by him who dy'd for thoſe that perſecuted him; yet very juſtly delivered to us, when we conſider our ſelves Offenders, and to be forgiven on the reaſonable Terms of Forgiving; for who can ask what he will not beſtow? Eſpecially when that Gift is attended with a Redemption from the cruelleſt Slavery to the moſt acceptable Freedom: For when the Mind is in Contemplation of Revenge, all its Thoughts muſt ſurely be tortured with the alternate Pangs of Rancour, Envy, Hatred, and Indignation; and they who profeſs a Sweet in the Enjoyment of it, certainly never felt the conſummate Bliſs of Reconciliation. At ſuch an Inſtant the falſe Ideas we received unravel, and the Shineſs, the Diſtruſt, the ſecret Scorns, and all the baſe Satisfactions Men had in each others Faults and Misfortunes, are diſpelled, and their Souls appear in their native Whiteneſs, without the leaſt Streak of that Malice or Diſtaſte which ſullied them: And perhaps thoſe very Actions, which, (when we looked at them in the oblique Glance with which Hatred doth always ſee Things) were Horrid and Odious, when obſerved with honeſt and open Eyes, are Beauteous and Ornamental.

But if Men are averſe to us in the moſt violent Degree, and we can never bring them to an amicable Temper, then indeed we are to exert an obſtinate Oppoſition to them; and never let the Malice of our Enemies have ſo effectual an Advantage over us, as to eſcape our good Will. For the neglected and deſpiſed Tenets of Religion are ſo Generous, and in ſo Tranſcendent and Heroick a manner diſpoſed for publick Good, that 'tis not in a Man's Power to avoid their Influence: for the Chriſtian is as much inclin'd to your Service when your Enemy, as the moral Man when your Friend.

But the Followers of a Crucified Saviour muſt root out of their Hearts all Senſe that there is any thing great and noble in Pride or Haughtineſs of Spirit; yet it will be very difficult to fix that Idea in our Souls, except we can think as worthily of our ſelves, when we practiſe the contrary Virtues; we

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we muſt learn and be convinced, that there is ſomething Sublime and Heroic in true Meekneſs and Humility, for they ariſe from a great, not a groveling Idea of things; for as certainly as Pride proceeds from a mean and narrow view of the little Advantages about a Man's ſelf, ſo Meekneſs is founded on the extended Contemplation of the Place we bear in the Univerſe, and a juſt Obſervation how little, how empty, how wavering are our deepeſt Reſolves and Councils. And as (to a well taught Mind) when you've ſaid an haughty and proud Man, you have ſpoke a narrow Conception, little Spirit, and deſpicable Carriage; ſo when you have ſaid a Man's meek and humble, you have acquainted us that ſuch a Perſon has arrived at the hardeſt task in the World, in an univerſal Obſervation round him, to be quick to ſee his own Faults and other Mens Virtues, and at the height of pardoning every Man ſooner than himſelf; you have alſo given us to underſtand, that to treat him kindly, ſincerely and reſpectfully, is but a meer Juſtice to him that is ready to do us the ſame Offices. This Temper of Soul keeps us always awake to a juſt Senſe of things, teaches us that we are as well a-kin to Worms as to Angels; and as nothing is above theſe, ſo is nothing below thoſe. It keeps our Underſtanding tight about us, ſo that all things appear to us great or little, as they are in Nature and the ſight of Heaven, not as they are gilded or ſullied by Accident or Fortune.

It were to be wiſhed that all Men of Senſe would think it worth their while to reflect upon the Dignity of Chriſtian Virtues, it would poſſibly enlarge their Souls into ſuch a Contempt of what Fathion and Prejudice have made honourable, that their Duty, Inclination and Honour would tend the ſame way, and make all their Lives an uniform Act of Religion and Virtue.

As to the great Cataſtrophe of this Day, on which the Mediator of the World ſuffered the greateſt Indignities and Death it ſelf for the Salvation of Mankind, it would be worth Gentlemens Conſideration, whether from his Example it would not be proper to kill all Inclinations to Revenge; and examine whether it would not be expedient to receive new Notions of what is Great and Honourable.

This is neceſſary againſt the Day wherein he who died ignominiouſly for us *ſhall deſcend from Heaven to be our Judge, in Majeſty and Glory.* How will the Man, who ſhall die by the Sword of Pride and Wrath, and in Contention with his Brother, appear before him, at *whoſe Preſence Nature ſhall be in an Agony, and the great and glorious Bodies of Light be obſcured; when the Sun ſhall be darkned, the Moon turned into Blood, and all the Powers of Heaven ſhaken; when the Heavens themſelves ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements diſſolve with fervent Heat; when the Earth alſo and all the Works that are therein ſhall be burnt up?*

What may juſtly damp in our Minds the Diabolical Madneſs, which prompts us to decide our petty Animoſities by the Hazard of Eternity, is, that in that one Act the Criminal does not only highly offend, but forces himſelf into the Preſence of his Judge; that is certainly his Caſe who dies in a Duel. I cannot but repeat it, He that dies in a Duel knowingly offends God, and in that very Action ruſhes into his offended Preſence. Is it poſſible for the Heart of Man to conceive a more terrible Image, than that of a departed Spirit in this Condition? Could we but ſuppoſe it has juſt left its Body, and ſtruck with the terrible Reflection, That to avoid the Laughter of Fools, and being the By-word of Idiots, it has now precipitated it ſelf into the Din of Demons, and the Howlings of Eternal Deſpair, how willingly now would it ſuffer the Imputation of Fear and Cowardice, to have one Moment left not to tremble in vain?

The Scriptures are full of pathetical and warm Pictures of the Condition of an happy or miſerable Futurity; and, I am confident, that the frequent reading of them would make the way to an happy Eternity ſo agreeable and pleaſant, that he who tries it will find the Difficulties, which he before ſuffered in ſhunning the Allurements of Vice, abſorb in the Pleaſure he will take in the purſuit of Virtue: And how happy muſt that Mortal be, who thinks himſelf in the favour of an Almighty, and can think of Death as a thing which it is an Infirmity not to deſire?

This Paper is to be had of Mr. Yemes *under the* Thatch'd-houſe *Tavern in St.* James's-ſtreet; *Mrs.* Bond *at* Charing-croſs; *Mrs.* Bolter *near the* Temple-gate; *and Mr.* Round *in* Exchange-Alley.

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